The University of Chicago Pozen Family Center for Human Rights Presents:

DOES HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE A HISTORY?

A conference honoring Professor Michael Geyer

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
APRIL 10-11, 2015

Regenstein Library, Room 122
humanrights.uchicago/HistoryConference2015

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ABOUT the conference

Does human rights have a history? As late as 1998 not a single reference to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights had appeared in any article of the American Historical Review. But by 2006 the field of human rights history had become prominent enough for the President of the American Historical Association to claim “we are all historians of human rights.” In this recent and very rapid development of the field, the fundamental premises of how we conceive of a history of human rights remain in flux and must be reconsidered: when were “human rights” invented and what were the major stages of the evolution of their different elements? Rights talk emerged in early modern natural law theory, if not before, and played a famous role in early modern revolutions. But while humanitarian agendas sprouted throughout modern history, the international human rights regime began to take root only in the 1940s and exploded to public prominence in the 1970s.

Do we then tell the longue durée of human rights history as an evolutionary narrative or one of sharp disjunctures and discontinuities? There are also critical substantive issues that remain unresolved. What counts as human rights history? What rights at particular times and places have been seen as human rights and what has made them visible in those moments? What leads ordinary people to band together to found initiatives to monitor human rights violations? When and under what conditions have states propounded and conformed to crucial cosmopolitan norms? Are human rights a Western discourse or are they rooted in a broader array of geographical, gendered, and cultural contexts?

This conference draws together leading historians of human rights working across time and space to address these urgent questions. In doing so it honors the contributions of Michael Geyer, Samuel N. Harper Professor of German and European History and the College and a founder of the Human Rights Program at The University of Chicago, to the field of human rights history and to the development of interdisciplinary studies of human rights thought and practice at The University of Chicago.

Faculty Organizers

Mark Philip Bradley, Jane Dailey, Emily Osborn, Amy Dru Stanley, and Tara Zahra

Additional Support provided by:

The University of Chicago Library
Center for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies
Center for International Studies
Department of Anthropology
Department of History
9:00 - 9:30am  Registration and Coffee

9:30 - 10:00am  Opening Remarks
Mark Philip Bradley
University of Chicago

10:00 - 12noon  Opening Plenary: Does Human Rights Have a History?
Panel Chair: Monica McWilliams, University of Ulster
“In Search of Social and Economic Human Rights”
Mary Nolan, New York University
“Conceptual Change and Human Rights”
Peter de Bolla, Cambridge University
“Yes…and No”
Mark Philip Bradley, University of Chicago
“Is the Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention a Human Rights History?”
Fabian Klose, Leibniz Institute of European History

12noon - 1:00pm  Lunch

1:00 - 3:00pm  Humanity and Human Rights
Panel Chair: Leora Auslander, University of Chicago
“By Virtue of Being Human: Slave Emancipation and the Revolutionizing of Human Rights”
Amy Dru Stanley, University of Chicago
“Beyond Manumission: Slave Emancipations in the Quest for Human Rights”
Julie Saville, University of Chicago
“Emigration, Ethnic Cleansing, and Humanitarianism in Interwar East Central Europe”
Tara Zahra, University of Chicago
“What is the Nineteenth-Century Concept of ‘Humanity’ Good For?”
Michael Geyer, University of Chicago

3:00 - 3:15pm  Break and Refreshments
3:15 - 4:45pm  
**Crimes of War**

Panel Chair: Eleonora Gilburd, University of Chicago

“Crimes Against Humanity and the ‘Subsequent’ Nuremberg Trials, 1946-1949”
Elizabeth Borgwardt, Washington University in St. Louis

“Between Idealism and Cynicism: The Nuremberg Trials and the Cold War Origins of Postwar Human Rights”
Francine Hirsch, University of Wisconsin-Madison

“Human Rights and the Legalist Paradigm of War: Convergence and Divergence”
Devin Pendas, Boston College

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**Saturday | April 11, 2015**

8:30 - 9:00am  
**Registration and Coffee**

9:00-11:00am  
**Civil Rights and Human Rights in America**

Panel Chair: Susan Gzesh, University of Chicago

“Of Theory and Practice: The Sacralization of Civil Rights in the United States”
Jane Dailey, University of Chicago

“Malcolm X, Human Rights, and the Problem with Civil Rights”
Moshik Temkin, Harvard University

“Sovereign Mediator: Ralph Bunche in the Void (Between Self-Determination and Human Rights)”
James T. Sparrow, University of Chicago

“A Double Standard Abroad and at Home?: The United States’ Response to Rhodesia’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence”
Sarah Snyder, American University

11:00 - 11:15am  
**Break and Refreshments**

11:15am - 1:15pm  
**Human Rights from South to North and East to West**

Panel Chair: Brodwyn Fischer, University of Chicago

“Anti-totalitarianism, Human Rights, and Democracy: On the French Left’s Strange Love Affair with Poland’s Solidarity Movement”
Robert Brier, German Historical Institute (Warsaw, Poland)
“Situating the Southern Cone in Global Human Rights Politics in the 1970s”
Patrick William Kelly, University of Chicago

“Interactional Invention of Human Rights: Converging and Reformulated Global Human Rights Initiatives in South Korea in the Early 1970s”
Ingu Hwang, University of Chicago

“Global Meets Local: Amnesty International and Soviet Dissidents”
Benjamin Nathans, University of Pennsylvania

1:15 - 2:30pm  Lunch

2:30 - 4:15pm  Legacies of Genocide in Rwanda and Its Aftermath: Roundtable
Panel Chair: Emily Osborn, University of Chicago

“Ignoring Warning Signs of Massive Human Rights Abuse in Rwanda, Before, During, and After the Genocide”
Filip Reyntjens, University of Antwerp

“What We Learn About the Present in Rwanda While Researching the Past”
Lee Ann Fujii, University of Toronto

“NGO Justice: African Rights as Pseudo-Prosecutor of the Rwandan Genocide”
Luc Reydams, University of Notre Dame

4:15 - 4:30pm  Break and Refreshments

4:30 - 6:00pm  Contemporary Human Rights and the Global Condition
Panel Chair: Jacqueline Bhabha, Harvard University

“Women’s Progress and Women’s Human Rights”
Martha Nussbaum, University of Chicago

Bradley Simpson, University of Connecticut

“Why is the Age of Human Rights the Age of Inequality?”
Samuel Moyn, Harvard University
Michael Geyer is the Samuel N. Harper Professor of German and European History and the College at The University of Chicago and helped create the university’s Human Rights Program, serving as its Faculty Director from 2008-2014. His areas of research interest are twentieth-century German and European history with a particular focus on war, civil war, genocide, and humanitarianism.

His recent publications include volume three of the *Cambridge History of World War II*, edited with Adam Toze (Cambridge, forthcoming); *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, edited with Shelia Fitzpatrick (Cambridge, 2009); *War and Terror in Contemporary and Historical Perspective*, editor (American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 2003) and *A Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*, written with Konrad Jarausch (Princeton, 2002).

Geyer has received awards from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and American Academy of Arts and Letters. He is an honoree of the Humboldt Forschungspreis and was a Daimler Chrysler Fellow in spring 2004 at the American Academy in Berlin. Born in Freiburg, Germany, Geyer earned his PhD in 1976 at the Albrecht-Ludwigs-Universität in Freiburg.

After a postdoctoral position at St. Anthony’s College, Oxford, he taught at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor until 1986 when he joined the faculty of The University of Chicago.
The University of Chicago
Pozen Family Center for Human Rights

The Pozen Family Center for Human Rights offers a broad range of innovative interdisciplinary teaching and research initiatives that critically explore the theory and practice of human rights. Founded in 1997 as the Human Rights Program, the PFCHR was renamed for the family of supporters Richard and Ann Pozen in June 2014.

The PFCHR advances the global study of human rights through:

- Developing a rigorous liberal arts curriculum that combines foundational research with practice-oriented training.
- Supporting research that brings together faculty and students from across the university to address the challenges of articulating universal human rights in a world of global interconnectedness.
- Organizing programs to enhance the university’s engagement with local, national, and international human rights communities.

Human Rights Program Founders, 1997

Jacqueline Bhabha
Alison Boden
James Chandler
Manuela da Cunha
Norma Field
Michael Geyer
Rashid Khalidi
Marvin Makinen
Adele Simmons
Geoffrey Stone

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Robert H. Kirschner
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